

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE reader who takes up this volume in expectation of finding an imaginary and romantic picture of things which never had an existence will probably lay it aside disappointed. The work is exactly what it professes to be in its title page—a narrative. As it relates, however, to matters which may not be universally understood, especially by the more imaginative sex, some of whom, under the impression that it is a fiction, may be induced to read the book, it becomes the interest of the author to explain a few of the obscurities of the historical allusions. He is admonished to discharge this duty, by the bitter cup of experience, which has often proved to him, that however ignorant the public may be of anything before it is presented to their eyes, the instant it has been subjected to that terrible ordeal, they, individually and collectively, and he may add intuitively, know more of it than the agent of the discovery; and yet, that, in direct opposition to this incontrovertible fact, it is a very unsafe experiment, either for a writer or a projector, to trust to the inventive powers of any one but himself. Therefore, nothing which can well be explained should be left a mystery. Such an expedient would only impart a peculiar pleasure to readers of that description, who find a strange gratification in spending more of their time in making books than of their money in buying them. With this preliminary explanation of his reasons for introducing so many unintelligible words in the very threshold of his undertaking, the author will commence his task. Of course, nothing will or need be told with which any one in the smallest degree acquainted with Indian antiquities is not already familiar.

The greatest difficulty with which the student of Indian history has to contend is the utter confusion that pervades the names. When, however, it is recollected that the Dutch, the English, and the French each took a conqueror's liberty in this particular; that the natives themselves not only speak different languages, and even dialects of those languages, but that they are also fond of multiplying their appellations, the difficulty is more a matter of regret than of